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Politicization of the scientific authority suspected

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The *Washington Post* article in fact questions the entire independence of the licensing procedure for agrochemical substances. Several institutions are in the dock. The American newspaper attributes the fact that the Federal Environmental Agency (EPA) finally refused to acknowledge the role of atrazine as an endocrine disrupter in large measure to a petition based on the Data Quality Act. This law tabled by a lobbyist, was adopted in 2000 to enable the population and businesses to call into question information provided by the Government but regarded as imprecise. In fact that law is used primarily by industrialists to require the State to use data backed by a high level of certainty. Many scientists take the view that this law is being used by the Bush Administration to politicize the scientific authority largely for the benefit of industrial interests.

More than 4000 scientists, including dozens of Nobel Prizewinners, have signed petitions against this abusive use of the law in the last six months, according to the *Washington Post*.

Unlike the European authorities, the EPA considers it “unlikely” that atrazine may have a carcinogenic effect on human beings. In this regard, Syngenta explains that the EU decision was based on concern that the applications of atrazine in the past exceeded the norm fixed arbitrarily for ground water. It claims that this norm has no basis in science or health considerations and has nothing to do with a potential toxicity or risk to health.